

On the Eve

Welcome to the age of Neo-Technology and the rise of powerful AI in the creative space through applications such as Midjourney and DALL-E to name but a few of these rising creative stars.

This article discusses some of the implications of the introduction of Artificial Intelligence to the creator sector, the ethics and implications, tensions and potential for revolutionary fall-out that could cause the greatest shuffle in artistic history and creator employment since the Industrial Age.

To begin with, let's examine the normative/average process for traditional artistic/creative creation through Four Pillars.

The artist sets themselves aside from possessing the capacity to dream up or imagine a concept either free style in their mental space or with boundaries and fitted to a brief such as through an art commission, but also to execute it in a signature or multi-signature style. The key element here is the currency of IMAGINATION. Some of us have it, but translating it from our mind to medium, requires an artist/creative mindset.

The artist/creative, is entrusted with the task of visualising into being, either their own ideas or ideas with guidelines requested by the purchaser, (or derived from a niche or pressure from the market) who cannot for various reasons, create the art on their own. Herein, the purchaser employs the talents and skills of someone who is capable of following directions, can execute the desired visual in a given set of tools, masterfully, to a set time period, in a specific quality and who may also be requested to make tweaks or minor changes. The artist is usually proficient with a set of tools it would take the purchaser too long to learn themselves, and gain the relative skill possessed by the artist - thus making the hiring of an artist a cost-effective decision. A key element here is ECONOMY of design. It is going to cost less to pay someone to make the art than to learn the skills to do it yourself – that is, you delegate that task to someone more experienced and capable according to the sound principles of the efficiency of the division of labour.

The artist, by whatever means/medium they choose or are tasked to work with, spends X number of hours creating multiple sketches, drafts, roughs, prototypes, to bridge the divide between what is in their mind they wish to express, or to meet in the middle combining their capacities and capabilities to best match what the client wants. This process can take anywhere from days to months – sometimes years. Every step of the process requires the artists time and energy to complete, during which they cannot complete or focus on other creative tasks – every commission or piece, is a choice that abandons the potential to manifest many others.

This time and energy spent manifesting a particular piece is paid for by a client. There is an inexorable struggle for the artist and the client to learn each other's language, to understand what is meant by specific terms (encapsulated as "vision") and many processes stumble through miscommunication, adjustments to the directions and angle, tweaks and sometimes outright frustration that the art is not representative, taking too long, not what was expected or even entirely unusable. Meanwhile, the client has sunk time and energy of their own into helping to manifest the art by providing funding, instructions and guidance to steer the ship – they too cannot reclaim that time on which they could have spent doing other things. A key element here is RECIPROCITY – a mutual moving together or in sync with each other to produce, adjust, fine-tune and create a finished piece through the application of time and energy. Some reciprocal projects move faster than others depending on the artist to client fit. Some, crash and burn resulting in friction and frustration between both parties where the outcome may even be the abandonment of that project entirely.

Such is the Creative Process. It can be arduous and difficult – especially under the provision of guidelines for some, though there are many that like the structure instead of absolute freedom to fill a white space. But for the reasons above – it brings with it its own challenges that many who are not artists often do not understand or may be confused as to the emotionality of working with artists on various projects. It is fair to say, they fail to see an association with the creative artistic force and capability to bring something into being, is sourced from deeply personal pieces of the artist, as an extensions of our being from the invisible into a space where anyone can see it, as an imprint of who we are into collective memory as an artifact, our will or life force poured into something meaningful (or meaningless) which includes contributing energy to the building of someone else's dreams. To help complete a book, a game, a comic, a character sketch, a building blueprint. Whatever it is – the price of the transaction is not solely fixed by the value of monetary exchange.

So too, the creative process can be greatly, sublimely enjoyable – a cathartic rollercoaster of interacting with the mouldable clay of the universe to make and bring to life shapes and forms with their own presence and being: a 'piece' worked on to express something that cannot be felt, seen, experienced, shared, known by others until it is made manifest. And to leave in the world, a piece of oneself, a shard of the soul, a reminder of our impact and a contributor to the growth, evolution, understanding, appreciation, awe, wonder, inspiration, realisations of others. The key element here is PERSONALITY.

Through personality, we come to adopt, express, be known for, a certain style. That style sets us apart, it becomes a flag, a calling card, an identifying representation that allows others to see us, recognise us, find us, or find more of us. We cultivate our style not through arbitrary means but as the collective composition of our entire lives, all our emotional connections, life-lived experiences, heartaches and joys, our perspectives and prejudices, our preferences and our window onto which we open reality (which may be distinct enough from others to the point we be seen as an artist to them). Sharing this of ourselves can get possessive, guarded, commercialised, commoditised, copyrighted, intellectual propertyed, hoarded carefully like a dragon skulking over its gold because it is to us our essence, the matrix of who we are woven into pleasing shapes for others our ourselves. It is a signature imprint. When we say the names Picasso, Da Vinci, Faberge, Banksy we know the power of that imprint – we see flashes of their style as our brain fetches those artists work from the catalogue and shuffles them into our minds eye in an instant - and we know it is distinct even if we do not know why. The key element here is PROPRIETY. There is among all things a critical distinction of individuality involved in the artist/creative process, a style that sets our work apart, or elevates it to a new place that commands the attention of the viewer and the curiosity, appreciation and recognition of the audience. That style we feel, belongs to us, it is us, through the virtue of who we are and how we have lived, how we have understood, how we apprehend colours, shapes, lines, composition, perspective, dimension, forms, forces come's through when we create and tells someone who created it without us having to be there – or – that someone particular created it without us having to be there, it is a desirous skill presented, one that others might envy, be in awe of, and as is the ancient form of sympathetic magic – seek to replicate by copying it and maybe even passing it off as their own. This brings us, to a highly contentious divide on the eve of the greatest technological tsunami the world has experienced in the past 200 years since the rise of the Industrial Revolution.

Let's now address those four principles in relation to the process of Artificially Intelligent (AIART) programs to see why that can be predicted to be the case.

Firstly, as I write this, the technology is nascent – it has not yet 'arrived' to the mainstream but is spreading like wildfire making its way in a trickle that has widened to a river and is now surging in

intensity like a gigantic wave gathering momentum and speeding toward the mainland to crash with the force of a million tons. Some of us – have seen the water rush out as the Age of Traditional Art suddenly felt an unexplained tremor and something intangible separated itself from the Artistic Realm. Some of us – are still sitting happily in our apartments in the cities on the mainland of this metaphor, unaware of the immense creative force soon to smash upon them and sweep them out to sea and along in its torrent as a seething, boiling, unstoppable mass. This is both a terrifying and an exhilarating time to be alive – to witness this moment and pen these thoughts just before the wave arrives. If you think that is dramatic, I fear you're on the mainland.

With the creative process outlined here are the relationships we can expect from AI.

IMAGINATION. Even the greatest human artist cannot create every style, cannot master every medium, cannot imagine more than a few brief degrees on the circle of creativity. AI can not only imagine any style of any artist – it can replicate, modify, variate, reproduce, tweak, alter, fuse, improve, evolve them in the space of seconds, minutes, hours to reach a level no human artist can fathom.

RECIPROCITY. AI does not take the artistic process personally. It will never get upset or defensive regardless of how many times you ask it to change something. You only have yourself to blame if you cannot use the technology to achieve what you ask it to – but for most people that is an entirely acceptable trade-off and better than working with another temperamental human.

PERSONALITY. AI art is Apersonal, it can paint a million times faster without fatigue adopting any artistic personality you wish it to and equally suffer no loss of creative drive, no lapse of energy, no personal barrier to representation as it churns out a torrent of produce that would annihilate a comparative human artists patience, time, effort or resources. Yet it paints in a way that is utterly distinct to any human hand.

PROPRIETARY. AI art is A-proprietary, it belongs to everyone and no-one: it is the speedier version of the collective contributions of the art community to Art for the past 1000+ years in an instant box. It is the forerunner principle to be applied to new transformative approaches to older existing structures right across the planet including income.

And now with this in mind we come to one last category, SUPERIORITY.

AI can make you anything. It can make it over and over and over. At a mere fraction of the cost of paying for a traditional artist. It will let you prototype thousands of examples to choose from instead of paying for a few. It will bypass all the pre-production stages of brief, discussion, structuring, prototyping, sketching, drafting, adjusting, proofing, finalising that take time, money and energy to move through: and let you output your finished piece with extraordinary quality in seconds. It directly competes with anyone who offers visual sketches, proofs, commissions, prototypes, covers, graphics, tokens, maps, photos, 3d modelling, marketing, media, stock photos, illustrations and literally any other source of artistic expression because it offers *superior output, quality, quantity, speed and price*. It can let you make movies, gifs, slides, and coupled with other technologies dwarfs the relative creative skill and look of traditional art. And if it doesn't match the quality, quantity, price, output, speed of your art? - it can be fused with yours into a greater evolution, by anyone.

If everyone that resembles you and your source of creative income are being beaten on the five pillars of market economy effortlessly - how can you compete? Certainly, there is an emerging divide and tension between those championing the merits of traditional art and those such as myself embracing the profound capabilities of AI. It is already evident that a divide is widening the art

community. Many are unsure *how to*, that is, if they *can* or *should* claim proprietary over the images created by AI as their own works. There is no doubt an unconscious sense of the tremor beginning to dawn that this new-fangled AI business represents a grave threat to the livelihood of many traditional artists and Aiartists assigned their signature to such marvellous works are being questioned, ridiculed, punished and excluded as fakes, posers and pretenders. That artists hold out a bulwark and claim a line in the sand between the esteem of real art vs the rise of AI manifestations created through the input of prompts and typed ideas misses a serious point. While some will hold fast to traditional art, others adopt a mix of both, and more and more switch to AI completely – the effect on the customer, the consumer, the paying purchaser of such art must be taken into account. Expectations are changing, with stunning, exotic, mind-blowing compositions attainable in moments for free how long can that bulwark stay standing? How will Art and the very concept of an Artist be redefined in a world where the four pillars have been supplanted and challenged by the five pillars of AI. Can anyone be an artist or does it take a specific skill? What will the landscape look like when being an artist is no longer a speciality or no longer requires an attachment of the soul or is driven by an attachment to the soul but purely by experimentation and need? By curiosity and re-invention?

Artists may already be realising the signs: maybe their commissions have dropped, their clients have fallen silent, fewer are seeking them out for their services, and they see the deluge of stunning visuals swamping the internet. Today may be one of the last times Art remains the expressive power of the few. There's a storm coming – and it will hit, any day now. and it is just the first storm - of many to come.

On the cusp on a new era - together we take an impossible leap forward. Let us not be afraid as the future rushes toward us in new shapes and forms. Embrace the Future, Exhaust the Possibilities.

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[Game Tile Warehouse]

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